

North Western Waters Regional Advisory Council
(NWW RAC)

Working Group 2
Western Approaches and Celtic Sea (ICES VII except a,d&e)

Tuesday the 28th of February 2006
1400hrs-1800hrs

Chair: Hugo Cristantino

Adoption of Agenda

The Chair proposed that the agenda item regarding deepwater gillnets be moved further down the agenda as this subject had been extensively discussed in the previous working group. Subject to this item being allocated sufficient time for discussion this change was accepted and the agenda was adopted by consensus.

Adoption of Minutes of the Last Meeting

Following a clarification from the Spanish delegation regarding a translation error on page 5 of the minutes, which was corrected, the minutes were adopted.

Marking and Identification of Gear

A range of safety, practical and cost issues were raised by various delegations these were mainly covered in the draft position statement prepared by the secretariat in the meeting papers.

Deployment and retrieval issues in adverse weather conditions were of particular concern as well as the height and weight requirements of the proposed dhans. It was also noted that the Commission's consultation procedure had been particularly poor in this instance, with little or no input from the fishing industry.

It was agreed that in its present form the regulation was unworkable and created severe safety implications. Therefore it was agreed that the draft position paper should be amended and presented to the Commission at the 7 March meeting to be held in Brussels.

(Position paper attached for information.)

'Pingers'

Again a range of safety, practical and cost issues were raised by various delegations and these were mainly covered in the draft position statement prepared by the secretariat in the meeting papers.

The NGOs agreed that there were a number of valid technical and practical problems with the regulation, however felt that if there was a need to delay implementation clear objectives and a firm timescale for resolution and implementation should be identified, although they were unclear on the specific timescales involved.

The fishing industry stated that alternative measures such as larger pingers attached to the vessel or on the ends of the gear should be explored further.

It was agreed that in its present for this regulation had serious safety and cost implications for the netting fleet. Subject to the inclusion of the following statement it was unanimously agreed that the position statement in the meeting papers be presented to the Commission at the 7 March meeting to be held in Brussels.

'The views expressed above were accepted unanimously by the NWW RAC subject to a reservation by the environmental NGOs who believe that if a delay is unavoidable then there must be clearly defined objectives for further investigations with a firmly set timescale'

(Position paper attached for information.)

Technical Conservation Measures

It was noted that the NWW RAC had set up a Technical Conservation Measures (TCM) focus group to look at this issue at the Executive Committee meeting held in Madrid on 31 January 2006.

It was felt by the group that the TCM focus group was the appropriate forum to look at this issue in detail. In the first instance the Commission non-paper on this issue would be the starting point. It was agreed that specific points/issues should be fed into this group through the secretariat of the NWW RAC. Subsequently the focus group would develop a paper that would be considered by the NWW RAC Executive Committee and Working Groups.

It was agreed that the RAC has an important co-ordinating role and that the views of all stakeholders should be captured in the development of a final NWW RAC paper.

It was noted that the Commission intended to issue a second non-paper and that this should be considered in the course of the work carried out by the TCM focus group.

It was noted that the membership list for the TCM focus group was not exhaustive and that those who felt that they could make a meaningful contribution should attend.

It was agreed that the TCM focus group would submit a paper for the next meeting.

Simplification of the EU regulation

Again, it was noted that the NWW RAC had set up a Simplification focus group to look at this issue at the Executive Committee meeting held in Madrid on 31 January 2006 and that this was the appropriate forum for detailed discussion.

The Spanish delegation proposed that an invitation a prominent person from the Commission should be extended to allow for clarification and explanation on specific issues.

It was agreed that additional specific points/issues should be fed into this group through the secretariat of the NWW RAC.

Electronic logbooks

It was agreed that clarification should be sought from the Commission with regard to their current position on this issue.

A number of concerns regarding privacy of information, commercial confidentiality and additional regulatory burden were expressed. In the current climate of strict control it was felt that this could simply be an additional burden with no benefit to the fishing industry.

In contrast a number of interventions expressed that the principal might be a good thing, offering real time information, improving data deficiencies in the system. However the point was made that if the Commission felt the need to exert this degree of control it had to be a useful management tool and not a stick to beat the industry with.

It was noted that potential implications for skippers and crews should be taken into account and that the issue must be dealt with transparently from the beginning.

The issue of cost was raised, as this appeared to be a control and management benefit should the cost not be borne (at least in part) by the Commission and there was unanimous agreement that if electronic logbooks were to be introduced it must be ensured that there is no duplication of existing arrangements.

It was agreed that this was a complicated issue and immediate clarification from the Commission was required before this issue could be progressed meaningfully.

Deep Water Gillnet Fishery

There was a wide-ranging discussion on this issue from which a number of common themes emerged. In particular the Commission's process of implementing the closure was seen as particularly poor and unnecessarily hasty.

It was felt that the inclusion of the hake fishery had been a Commission oversight and the immediate reopening of that fishery should be sought.

It was agreed that any position presented by the NWW RAC at its meeting with the Commission on 7 March 2006 in Brussels on this issue had to be credible and coherent. To this end a position paper was to be drafted by the secretariat to reflect the opinion of all of the members of the working group and in close collaboration with Working Group 1 (West of Scotland) where the issue had also been discussed extensively.

The NWW RAC position paper is attached for information and clearly reflects the consensus views of the working group.

Any Other Business

There was no further business.

Paul Trebilcock
16 March 2006

ANNEX

Comité National des Pêches (National Fisheries Committee)
CNPMEM

Paris, March 9th, 2006

Addressees:

**Members of the
NWWRAC**
co-ordination group
+ *Bureau*

COVER NOTE

Ref.: HC/ST/160-2006

Number of documents: 1

From: Stéphanie Tachaires

Tel: 01 72 71 18 13

E-mail: stachaires@comite-peches.fr

Document:

Memo on the NWWRAC working groups
held on February 28th and March 1st 2006 in The Hague (Netherlands)

Dear Sir or Madam

Please find attached a brief summary of the Celtic Sea, West of Scotland and English Channel working groups of the NWWRAC that were held in The Hague on February 28th and March 1st, and which the CNPMEM participated in. These documents do not replace the minutes that will be drawn by the rapporteur of each group.

Yours sincerely,

Hubert CARRE
Signature
Managing Director

MEMO

NWWRAC Working Group - 28/02 and 01/03/06 - The Hague

From: Stéphanie Tachaires

Tel: 01 72 71 18 13

E-mail: stachaires@comite-peches.fr

Contents		
1-	<u>West of Scotland WG1</u>	P.1
2-	Western approaches and Celtic Sea WG2	P.3
3-	English Channel WG3	P.5
4-	Irish Sea WG4 (the CNPMEM did not attend this group)	

NB: Translation problems occurred during the meeting.

***Western approaches and Celtic Sea Working Group
(ICES VII, except a, d, e Areas)***

1. Adoption of minutes:

The minutes were adopted.

2. Issues discussed:

a. Ban on gillnet fishing (TAC and quota regulation 51/2006)

Following a report on the agreement obtained by the West of Scotland Group in relation to the reopening of hake fishing, a new discussion took place. This group also adopted the position requiring the reopening of hake gillnet "volanta" fishing in accordance with certain supervision conditions, a requirement to clean up the area and the principle that financial compensation be sought from the European Commission (with WWF reservations on reopening).

There was no agreement about a full reopening in relation to monkfish and deepwater shark gillnet fishing. It was decided to propose a campaign of experimental monitoring using 5 vessels (a priori) to carry out a scientific study on the impact of this fishery and to analyse the ship-owners' supervision proposals of the. Financial compensation will be sought from the Commission in relation to the vessels that cannot go back to sea. The full position that will be presented by the RAC to the representatives of the Commission on March 7th is attached.

b. Marking and identification of fishing gear (regulation 356/2005)

The regulation 356/2005 in relation to the marking of gear, adopted in March, was amended by regulation 1805/2005. It makes it more flexible by imposing the

installation of intermediary buoys every 5 miles instead of every mile as initially planned. Several problems that are still posed by this regulation were underlined: overweight caused by additional gear onboard and the risks of vessel stability problems, problems of pennants on small boats, buoys that are too big resulting in risks for the crew when hauling and letting out. A RAC position document that was issued beforehand was agreed (see attached document). The Spanish representatives proposed that the type of radar reflectors used on yachts be used (different material and smaller size). This proposal was accepted. The position of the RAC will be presented to the Commission on March 7th.

c. Pingers (regulation 812/2004)

Issues of onboard safety and the cost associated with the compulsory requirement to fit fishing gear with pingers were explained once again as at the Executive Committee meeting in Madrid on January 31st. A RAC position document was drawn up and agreed (see attached document). The professionals indicated that an appropriate device has to be found before any compulsory requirement is imposed. However, the NGO representatives underlined the importance of having a precise timescale to set objectives in order to find an appropriate device within a set deadline. The position of the RAC will be presented to the Commission on March 7th.

d. Study of Technical Conservation Measures (regulation 850/98)

The members of the RAC insisted on the importance of the review of this regulation for professionals and also the importance of consultation. It was specified that the RAC should play a co-ordination role. Consequently, the proposals of the member states should go back to the RAC for discussion. The commission informed the RAC that a new consultation document is being developed. A "technical measures" working group within the RAC was planned at the Executive Committee meeting on January 31st and the development of a proposal for the RAC will be discussed within this group. The CNPMEM pointed out that a discussion was underway at the French level and a progress report on this discussion would be presented to the working group. This group should meet at the end of March.

e. Electronic logbooks

The members of the RAC are concerned about the implementation of electronic logbooks. What is the position of the Commission on this issue? The Spanish representatives insisted that clarification be obtained from the Commission. The other delegates pointed out that the advantages and drawbacks should be examined, in particular in regard to the simplification of data acquisition. The following points will have to be analysed before any eventual implementation of electronic logbooks: problems of data confidentiality, control of data processing and data validation, a reduction in control procedures, particularly in relation to the notification of entering and leaving areas, relevance and problems related to this device on small vessels.

f. Simplification

The simplification working group planned at the Executive Committee meeting of January 31st will meet on March 17th in London. The CNPMEM will attend. The members of the RAC suggested that a member of the Commission be invited to answer the questions about the Commission's intentions. The secretariat of the RAC undertakes to invite Christian Rambaud. Any document concerning simplification produced by one of the members should be sent as quickly as possible.